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# Spy Agencies Probe May Develop A Most Explosive Campaign Issue

By VERNON LOUVIERE  
Washington Bureau

A special House armed services subcommittee headed by Texas Congressman Paul Kilday launches an investigation



LOUVIERE

this week which could produce one of the most explosive issues of the 1960 presidential campaign. The subcommittee has been ordered to make a sweeping investigation of U.S. intelligence agencies, stressing the method of recruiting, screening and clearing personnel.

The probe was kicked off by the sudden disclosure that two missing National Security Agency mathematicians had turned up in Russia as defectors.

## Broad Scale Probe

Kilday made it quite clear, in announcing the opening of closed-door hearings on Thursday, that his subcommittee will not restrict itself to the defection of the NSA pair but would delve into the entire civilian and military intelligence system.

A list of witnesses made public by Kilday indicates no stone will be left unturned as the investigators seek to plug up loopholes in our super-secret intelligence agencies. They include top officials of the Central Intelligence Agency, the NSA, and Army, Navy and Air Force intelligence.

Kilday said the subcommittee later would determine if it is proper, and in keeping with

security restrictions, to open the hearings to the public.

"The American people are entitled to know all that goes on in their government," Kilday pointed out. "But when you are dealing with intelligence agencies you have to be very careful. We certainly don't want to reveal anything that would be harmful to the United States."

Kilday said he was reserving comment at this time on the rightness or wrongness in which intelligence personnel have been hired.

It is obvious from the lack of comment by responsible congressional leaders that they do not want to get involved in these developments lest they be charged with tying them into the political campaign.

## Political Overtones

But no Democrat is forgetting that in the 1952 campaign the issue of subversives in government was used to the hilt by the Republicans, with Vice President Nixon playing one of the leading roles.

Last week, Nixon's press secretary, Herbert G. Klein, was asked if Nixon felt the new uproar over security risks might prove a political liability in the current campaign. Klein said he did not think so. The 1952 campaign "was a different situation," said Klein. A reporter wanted to know how he arrived at that conclusion. Said Klein succinctly, there were a "great many more cases" in 1952.

## Campaign Fodder

If it turns out there are a great many loopholes in our intelligence system, Kilday has enough time to develop some rather interesting campaign

fodder for the Democrats. The religious issue—now paramount in the campaign—could quickly take a back seat if the spy probe bears fruit.

Kilday, of course, is not conducting the investigation in order to provide an issue for the presidential contenders. This goes without saying. But it is so patently obvious that the Democrats would like nothing more than to hang Nixon on the issue of subversives in government or like matters. One can almost picture former President Harry Truman's reaction if he is handed an opportunity like this. Truman still bristles whenever he recalls a statement by Nixon which Truman said implied he was a "traitor."

## Ready To Go

The Kilday subcommittee already has gathered substantial preliminary data and presumably is prepared to get the hearings off to a flying start. An extremely able member of the armed services committee, Kilday is well-equipped to perform a distinct service to his country in the manner in which this all-important investigation is conducted.